

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL LARD). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### A STUNNING REVELATION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I read a remarkable article this week in the Hill newspaper concerning the distinguished Senator from Georgia, Mr. CLELAND. The article recounted events that occurred 31 years ago in Vietnam when then-Captain CLELAND was gravely injured in a grenade explosion. The injuries that he received in that horrible accident cost him his right arm and both of his legs, and very nearly cost him his life. He was 25 years old at the time, and just 1 month shy—just 1 month shy—of completing his tour of duty in Vietnam. Now, think of that. Just a month to go.

For more than three decades, MAX CLELAND lived with the crushing belief that his own carelessness had caused the accident, that the hand grenade that shattered his body and shattered his life had somehow fallen from his own web belt when he jumped from the helicopter. Most people in MAX CLELAND's situation would have been consumed with self-pity, even if they had had the grit to live. Think of that. The young Captain CLELAND certainly battled it. But as he has handled so many of the challenges that have marked his life since that terrible day in Vietnam, MAX CLELAND triumphed over the lure of self-pity. He triumphed over his injuries. He triumphed over self-doubt. He triumphed over bitterness.

MAX CLELAND could have given up after that accident in Vietnam. Most of us would have. But he did not. He turned his misfortune into the service of others. Three years after returning home from Vietnam, he was elected to the Georgia State Senate, becoming the youngest member and the only Vietnam veteran in that body. In 1977, he became the youngest administrator of the U.S. Veterans' Administration and the first Vietnam veteran to head that Agency. He returned to Georgia where, in 1982, he was elected Secretary of State. And, in 1996, he was elected to the U.S. Senate from Georgia.

Now, that is a remarkable record, a remarkable feat. It is remarkable for anyone to reach the Senate of the United States. Out of all the millions of people that are in America, there are 100 Senators—the same number that were in the original Roman Senate when Romulus founded that city on the

banks of the Tiber. He created the Senate, made up of 100 of the wisest men, and he chose old men for that Senate.

So here is a man with the disadvantages that MAX CLELAND had to overcome, the struggle that he had to undergo daily and nightly, every hour of the day, even to live, and he made it to the U.S. Senate. In all of that time, he quietly blamed himself for the accident that so radically altered his life.

But last week, according to the report in the Hill, Senator CLELAND was stunned to learn from an eyewitness that the grenade that injured him was not one of his own, but had been lost by another soldier.

My wife and I are reading the Psalms. Every Sunday, we read it. Actually, we have completed the Psalms, and now we are in Ecclesiastes.

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

In our reading of the Bible, we have already read the New Testament and we have read the Old Testament. We have come all the way down, as I say, to the Book of Ecclesiastes. From the 85th Psalm, I will quote two lines:

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Through his indomitable spirit, MAX CLELAND overcame the injuries he received as a young Army captain in Vietnam and conquered the temptation to succumb to self-pity. He is an inspiration to us all, and I hope that he finds a measure of peace and solace in the long-lost truth that was revealed to him this past week.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the article from the March 17 issue of the Hill, titled, "For Senator Cleland, a Searing Revelation After 31 Years," be printed in its entirety at this point in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Hill, Mar. 17, 1999]

FOR SEN. CLELAND, A SEARING REVELATION  
AFTER 31 YEARS

(By E. Michael Myers and Betsy Rothstein)

For 31 years, Sen. Max Cleland (D-Ga.) has labored under the belief that he was to blame for dropping the hand grenade that forever transformed his life.

It was an otherwise insignificant moment in a still-divisive war, a terrible instant when Cleland lost his legs, his right arm and, for the time being, his dignity.

But from the confusion of that moment—the bleeding, the flood of nausea, the blinding pain, the medics scrambling to patch him together—has emerged an unshakable notion: that he was most likely responsible for that act.

That is, until now.

The year was 1968. The war, Vietnam. The place, a valley called Khe Sanh.

The valley, only 14 miles from the demilitarized zone, was as dangerous as it was deceptive.

From the air, Khe Sanh was a bastion of streams, rolling hills, picturesque cliffs, lush vegetation and even a waterfall. On the ground, it was teeming with giant rats,

razor-sharp grasses, precipitous grades and rivers with violent rapids.

Some 6,000 American Marines were holed up in Khe Sanh. Hiding in the hills surrounding the valley were North Vietnamese army troops. Nobody knew exactly how many. One estimate said 20,000. Another said twice that number.

The hills were so dangerous that supply convoys could not make it through Route 9, the main road into Khe Sanh. The Marines turned to helicopters for their shipments. But even that became so dangerous that C-130 planes had to swoop from the skies to drop supplies from the cargo bays.

Khe Sanh itself was hardly worth saving. Its strategic importance was so low that, when the Americans did finally capture it, they let it go again.

Instead, Gen. William Westmoreland feared another Dien Bien Phu, the 1954 battle which led to the French retreat from Vietnam. The sight of a brigade of Marines in body bags being hauled from Khe Sanh would have been a tragedy of awesome proportions.

That is why the general ordered Operation Pegasus, a large-scale joint Army-Marines rescue effort. Included in the operation was the Army's 1st Air Cavalry Division, the division of 25-year-old Capt. Max Cleland.

The tall son of a secretary and an automobile salesman from Lithonia, Georgia, had signed up for Reserve Officers' Training Corps at Stetson University, was trained in guerrilla warfare and had always ached to fight in an important battle.

After his first three months as a platoon leader of a signal battalion, he thought, "It didn't seem like much of a war."

So he volunteered for a dangerous new assignment that would take him to what he considered the nucleus of the war. He became communications officer with the 2nd Infantry Battalion of the 12th Cavalry with the Cav's 2nd Brigade.

Cleland's boredom quickly subsided. At one point during Operation Pegasus, he spent five days and five nights in a bomb crater 20 feet in diameter. In a letter to an aunt, he wrote, "If I ever make it back to the Atlanta airport, I'll be happy just to crawl home regardless of what shape I'm in."

Some of the hills around Khe Sanh were battlefields almost as harrowing as any in U.S. military history. Marines still boast of having survived battles known only as Hill 881 and Hill 861.

But the hill where Cleland's fate was decided—once east of Khe Sanh—would not become known for any great act of valor. Its strategic importance was as a communications relay station.

The 12th Cav's Maj. Maury Cralle, Cleland's commanding officer who was stationed in the rear, recalls that he had trouble communicating consistently with the front lines. A relay was needed.

On April 8, 1968, less than a week before the siege of Khe Sanh was broken and one month before his anticipated departure from Vietnam, Capt. Cleland accompanied his men by helicopter to the hill, arriving within minutes.

He had jumped from helicopters countless times before. Usually, there was nothing to it.

He jumped, and once clear of the spinning helicopter blades, turned, watching the chopper lift into the air. That's when he noticed the hand grenade resting on the ground.

Ordinarily, grenades only detonate when their pins are pulled. Somehow, this grenade's pin had become dislodged. All Cleland saw was the grenade.

"I went toward it," Cleland said in an interview with *The Hill* last week. "I didn't know it was live. It wasn't a heroic act. I just thought it was mine. I really didn't know where in the hell it came from."

The explosion threw Cleland backwards. His right hand and most of his right leg were gone, and his left leg was a bloody mass.

"The blast jammed my eyeballs into my skull, temporarily blinding me, pinning my cheeks and jaw muscles to the bones of my face," Cleland wrote in his 1980 memoir. "My ears rang with a deafening reverberation as if I were standing in an echo chamber."

For days, as he fought for his life, flashbacks of the incident haunted him. "Why had I pressed my luck? What was I trying to prove?"

For more than three months, he battled his condition in Walter Reed Army Medical Center in an orthopedics ward known as the "Snake Pit." It was there where he also battled his self-pity.

For years, Cleland has been inundated by the "awkward self-conscious stares of people."

"I have done that 'mea culpa' thing for a long time," he described last week. "Like, 'You were stupid to volunteer, you were stupid to go [to Vietnam], you were stupid to get blown up, you are stupid, stupid stupid.'"

His resolute spirit allowed Cleland to fight the self-doubts and to eventually serve as administrator of the Department of Veterans' Affairs under President Carter and win election to the Senate in 1996.

But as he rolled that critical event over and over again in his mind, one pervading thought stood still: "Somehow I had fumbled the ball."

Last week, Cleland was stunned when he received a phone call from a man named David Lloyd—a 60-mm mortar squad leader in "Charlie" Company of the 1st Brigade, 1st Regiment of the 1st Marine Division.

Lloyd told Cleland that the grenade that nearly killed him belonged to another soldier.

Lloyd, now a retired airline worker living in Annapolis, Md., told Cleland that he, too, had been stationed on that hill outside Khe Sanh that fateful day. Lloyd said he had watched as Cleland's helicopter came in for landing and, although he couldn't be sure, he believes he even took a photograph.

Lloyd provided *The Hill* with that photo, as well as evidence of his service in Charlie Company. Company-level documents could not be located for this article. But Marine Corps archival records confirm that one of his brigade's assignments was to set up a relay station outside Khe Sanh during the first two weeks of April 1968 for the Army's First Air Cavalry Division—Cleland's division.

Earlier this month, Lloyd was watching a program about combat medical corpsman on the History Channel in which the senator detailed his account of his injuries. For the first time, he learned that Cleland blamed himself for his injuries.

Lloyd was stunned. "He had said he had an accident, that he was always dropping things off his web belt, but that is not what happened," Lloyd described in an interview. "I was there, I know what happened."

Lloyd saw the explosion from his mortar pit 20 yards away and rushed up to Cleland's torn body.

"He was white as chalk," Lloyd said. "His pants were smoldering. It was devastating. I saw literally thousands of wounds in Vietnam. I never thought he would survive."

Lloyd cut off Cleland's shredded fatigues. He used a belt and medical wrappings to set a tourniquet around the bleeding stumps of his legs. Moments later, a Navy corpsman arrived on the scene and ordered Lloyd to help another wounded soldier who had numerous shrapnel wounds.

Said Lloyd of the second soldier: "He was crying, but I didn't think it was from the grenade fragments. He kept saying, 'It was my grenade, my grenade.' He was very upset."

Last Thursday, in the Senate Dining Room, Cleland and Lloyd met for the first time.

For a moment, the former Army captain's world turned upside down. "It is amazing, it is mind-boggling to go back to the most traumatic part of your life and have the furniture rearranged," Cleland said. "For 31 years, that has been the only story I really knew."

Slowly trying to digest the information Lloyd has given him, Cleland said, "I don't know whether this gives me relief or not. I guess it is better that way than if it had been my fault. It frees me up to a certain extent."

Still, for Cleland there are many unanswered questions.

"I think after you survive something traumatic, you wonder why the hell you are alive, why you were left and somebody else is taken. It is called survivor guilt."

"You wonder if God wants me here, why does He want me here, what is He out for?"

Cleland said he knows he is here only by the grace of God, good friends and people like Lloyd, who helped him when he was dying.

"I feel I am where the good Lord wants me. Otherwise I wouldn't be here, I would be on the Wall. Oh my God. Thirty-one years later, it wasn't my hand grenade at all, it was somebody else's? It's been a hell of a week."

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may be permitted to proceed for my full 10 minutes, if necessary.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### SPRINGTIME

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, there is an old adage—and I have heard it many times, and so have you and our other colleagues—that, "March comes in like a lion and leaves like a lamb." That adage was certainly turned on its ear this year. March tiptoed in on little lamb's hooves, as soft and warm as a curly fleece, giving us all hope of an early, mild spring.

Aha. The smiles that have lighted up the faces here in the pages and the officers of the Senate and the employees of the Senate who sit before me here when I mentioned that word "spring."

In West Virginia, the center of the world—half the world on one side, half the world on the other—West Virginia, early daffodils pushed through great rafts of dried leaves washed up against old stone farmhouse foundations that jut like rocky reefs out of sunny hillsides. Oh, the iridescent sunsets and the viridescent hills that are West Virginia's. Bluebirds decorated telephone line perches while forsythia blossoms announced the awakening of the Earth.

Then the March lion roared with a vengeance, sending successive storm waves across the Nation. Snow buried the daffodils under a crystalline blanket of sparkling white. West Virginia was hit hard by these late storms, as were many other States. What was a boon for skiers and schoolchildren has been a real hardship for commerce and commuters.

But now, as the vernal equinox and the official first day of spring approaches, we can all look forward to the lion at last lying down with the lamb. It is time, as the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909), wrote in "Atlanta in Calydon":

For winter's rains and ruins are over,

And all the season of snows and sins;

The days dividing lover and lover,

The light that loses, the night that wins;

And time remembered is grief forgotten,

And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,

And green underwood and cover

Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

Once again, the warm sun encourages us to consider folding away our scarves, our gloves, and our overcoats, retiring the snow shovel to the shed, and pulling out instead the trowel and the seed packets.

How many of us have enjoyed looking at those seed packets and fancying ourselves as young farmers, how we would grow these cucumbers, or these tomatoes, or this lettuce, or these onions, or the potatoes?

What promise is contained in seed packets! What a joy. Reading garden catalogs during cold, dark winter days inspires small-scale gardeners like myself with dreams of grandeur. Ah, fancy myself growing these beautiful vegetables. Ah, I am sure that others have shared that plesantry with me many times. A few tomato plants are all that I really have the time for, but for me those humble plants with the spicy scent, their soft leaves and glossy fruits—Better Boy, Big Boy, Beefsteak, Early Girl—a few tomato plants are all that I really have the time for, but for me, those humble plants with their spicy scent, their soft leaves and glossy fruits, serve each year to reconnect me with cycles of nature. In my few tomato plants, I share with farmers throughout the Nation worries about cold spells, early frosts, drought, excessive rainfall, fungus, and insect infestation. But, like those farmers throughout the Nation, I glory in the success of my efforts, and my family and neighbors—mostly my family—share in the bounties of those tomato plants.

How can one even dare to believe that there is no God, no Creator? Why do I put those tomato plants in the ground? Why? I have confidence that the Creator of man and the universe is going to make those tomato plants bear some fruit.

And this year I will delight in introducing the newest member of my family, too—I say to our distinguished leader, a new member of my family—a